

Mr. Chairman, members of the Board of Supervisors... thank you for the opportunity to present to you this report on the “State of Emergency Planning and Preparedness” here in Fairfax County.

The background of the slide is a stylized American flag, with the stars and stripes visible. The stars are white on a blue field, and the stripes are red and white.

## Presentation Overview

- Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?
- Who is in Charge?
- Evacuation
- Special Populations
- Communications
- Action Plan

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I will be addressing six major areas relating to the County's emergency preparedness and planning:

- The progress the County has made since September 11, 2001.
- A clear overview of the County's emergency management response and who is in charge during an incident.
- Evacuation plans, especially in light of the visuals everyone has seen from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in New Orleans and Texas.
- The needs and responses by the County to special populations.
- The ways the County communicates with its residents as well as internally with key responders.
- And finally, I will outline a future action plan for continued efforts the County can undertake in this important area.



## **Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?**

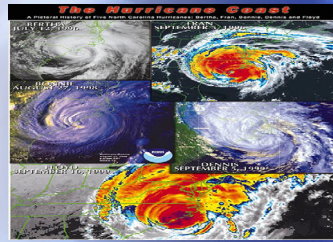
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The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, elevated the issue of homeland security and emergency preparedness planning to a whole new level, both across the country and region, as well as locally here in Fairfax County. The County has taken a number of steps and actions since 9/11 to better prepare our staff to respond to any events that may occur.

Before I go into those, I would like to make it clear that Fairfax County's plans are not just centered on possible terrorist events. While we are in close proximity to the nation's capital and many targets of interest, the County must be prepared for any type of emergency situation.

## **“All Hazards” Approach**

- Fairfax County uses an “all hazards” approach to emergency management.



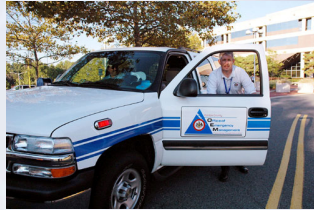
That is why the County uses an “all hazards” approach to emergency management, which means we need to be prepared for everything from severe weather events to terrorist attacks to traffic interruptions. And our emergency management staff work across all four phases of emergencies: mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

The County uses a decentralized approach to manage emergency management. This is accomplished through activation and staffing of the Alternate Emergency Operations Center and through the County’s comprehensive Emergency Operation Plan. I have delegated emergency management roles and responsibilities to 26 County agencies and external partners.



## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Office of Emergency Management created.
- Elevated from a division within the Police Department.



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Since 9/11, Fairfax County has:

- Created the Office of Emergency Management, elevating the division to its own agency from within the Police Department (on May 3, 2004). This recognizes the stature of the work of our emergency management coordinator and his staff and the importance of the role of the Office of Emergency Management.
- The Office of Emergency Management is a coordinating agency and since emergencies cut across so many agencies, OEM works across the entire County and the many emergency support functions.
- Establishment of OEM has helped the County establish a higher level of emergency operational readiness and commitment within the community and County; ensured that emergency management plans are consistent and compatible with regional and state emergency plan guidelines; increased interaction and participation with other jurisdictions to exchange information and promote a regional homeland security response; and provided an equivalent level of emergency protective actions for both County residents and County employees, for both private and County facilities and for critical infrastructure throughout Fairfax County.
- This work was recognized when OEM was presented a 2005 NACo Award for “enhancing emergency management through partnerships, facilities and technology.”

## **Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?**

- Created the Emergency Management Coordinating Committee.
- Created an Executive Board of the EMCC.
- Created the Emergency Management Grants Coordinating Committee.
- Created a Homeland Security Inter-Agency Task Force.

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The EMCC, or Emergency Management Coordinating Committee, is chaired by Deputy County Executive Rob Stalzer. The EMCC is a senior level group of County staff that work with other County agencies and partner organizations that have identified roles in the Emergency Operation Plan to better coordinate resources to ensure a positive response to emergency situations in Fairfax County. The EMCC is composed of the County's public safety agencies and other operating departments, the County School system, Fairfax Water and other County and Regional organizations such as George Mason University and Inova Hospital.

In addition, I created an Executive Board of the EMCC including myself, the Deputy County Executive for Public Safety and Planning, the Chief Information Officer, the Public Health Director, Police Chief, Fire Chief, Director of Public Affairs and the Emergency Management Coordinator. The group meets on a regular basis to discuss homeland security issues from a County policy perspective and serves as the Homeland Security Leadership Team.

The Emergency Management Grants Coordinating Committee, chaired by OEM, meets monthly to coordinate applications for multi-agency emergency preparedness and response grant opportunities, develop application plans for grant awards, implement grant-funded programs and activities and report on and account for allocated funds. The County also looks for grant funding to provide additional resources for County agencies across all areas of responsibility. One such grant was a \$12 million Byrne Discretionary Grant received over a 24-month period beginning in July 2002. These funds were used to provide equipment for the Alternate Emergency Operations Center, which I will cover in just a moment; obtain sophisticated command and communications equipment, improve public safety radio coverage and purchase specialized gear for first responders.

Operational level staff from public health, police, fire, public affairs and emergency management also meet regularly as part of a Homeland Security Inter-Agency Task Force, chaired by OEM. This task force works to review and coordinate equipment, procedures, technical information, planning, training and exercises related to homeland security.

## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Alternate Emergency Operations Center (AEOC) – the Fairfax County Command Center.



Managed by OEM, the Alternate Emergency Operations Center, or AEOC, is the County's Command Center. This is where senior County staff assemble to manage resources and direct the County's response to an emergency situation.

As you know, the emergency operations center is called the Alternate Emergency Operations Center since a new emergency operations center will be included in the Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center, or PSTOC, to be built in late 2007.

You may not realize that the AEOC has been used 14 times for exercises and trainings since it opened in September 2004. The AEOC was the site for the regional Joint Information Center during the false anthrax incident in March of this year at the Skyline Office Complex. And it served as the hub for the regional planning for the Northern Virginia teams that were deployed to the Gulf Coast. The facility has also been used over 130 times for additional County, State or Federal training sessions and agency meetings related to emergency preparedness and homeland security.

## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- The AEOC provides:
  - The ability to monitor traffic cameras throughout Northern Virginia, D.C. and Maryland.
  - National Weather Service data.
  - GIS mapping and data.
  - Telephone and video conferencing capability.



Since traffic is a major area of concern for the County and our region, one of the benefits of the County's AEOC is the ability to monitor traffic cameras from throughout Northern Virginia, D.C. and Maryland.

The AEOC provides back-up communications equipment for public safety personnel, audio-visual equipment for scenario briefings and the use of GIS mapping and data to respond to emergency events or severe weather. The AEOC also provides access to weather data, images and telephone and video conference briefings from the National Weather Service during severe weather incidents. The AEOC has the capability to allow Channel 16 to receive a video feed and broadcast emergency instructions and information direct to the public.

The AEOC includes a back-up system to the Regional Emergency Notification System, known as RICCS, providing redundancy to the National Capital Region in the event of a major emergency.



## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Various positions established:
  - Emergency Information Officer (Public Affairs).
  - Emergency Planner and Epidemiologist (Health).
  - Battalion Chief for Emergency Preparedness (Fire and Rescue).
  - Urban Area Security Initiative Exercise, Training and NIMS Compliance Officer (OEM).



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Since 9/11, Fairfax County has also created several positions specific to homeland security issues, including:

- An Emergency Information Officer position within the Office of Public Affairs. OPA has also worked with public information officers throughout the County to create the PIO Corps, which will bring together the County's combined public information resources in times of emergency.
- A Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention grant, through the Virginia Department of Health, established Emergency Planner and Epidemiologist positions in the Health Department. This significant augmentation to current staff has enabled the creation of the Health Department's mass medication dispensing plan and stepped-up diseases surveillance efforts. The Health Department continues to work with the health care provider community to conduct surveillance 24/7 for diseases that are naturally occurring or potentially bioterrorism-related. Surveillance – and response should there be an unusual pattern of illness – is coordinated with other health departments in the National Capital Region.
- The Fire and Rescue Department has established a Battalion Chief for Emergency Preparedness. Fire and Rescue also has assigned a Fire employee to the Office of Emergency Management to serve as Urban Area Security Initiative Exercise, Training and NIMS Compliance Officer. This position will be responsible for planning training exercises and serve as the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Implementation and Compliance Officer for Fairfax County. Since 9/11, the Fire and Rescue Department's Hazardous Materials Response Team was established as a full-time unit, and Fire and Rescue is also home for Virginia Task Force 1, a search and rescue unit that was recently deployed to help recover from Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ophelia.

## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Various positions established:
  - Security Manager (Facilities Management).
  - Homeland Security Planner (OEM).
  - Cyber Security Officer (DIT).



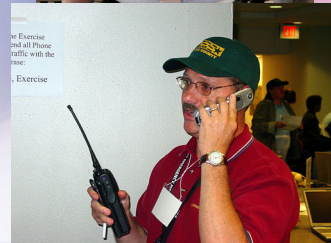
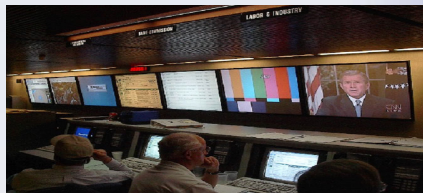
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- The Security Manager within FMD has worked to create emergency response plans and train agency staff to serve as emergency response coordinators at County work sites.
- OEM is in the process of filling a Homeland Security Planner position.
- The Department of Information Technology also created a Cyber Security Officer position to help protect the County's IT infrastructure.



## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Watch Officer Program provides 24/7 vigilance, awareness and intelligence that will monitor ongoing incidents and provide alert notifications as part of the “all hazards” approach.



The Watch Officer concept, within the Office of Emergency Management, is a new one for Fairfax County and it:

- Provides communication to County officials, emergency responders, residents, employees, businesses and other partners.
- Provides a single point of contact for Fairfax County 24/7, 365 days a year.
- Coordinates message flow from multiple sources.
- Monitors various information sources.

These Watch Officers also serve as the hub for sending out our Community Emergency Alert Network messages to inform the public about any emergency.

## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Stormwater Planning (DPWES) – collaborating with the Army Corps of Engineers on a study project to mitigate the flooding potential and update the evacuation plan for the Belle View/New Alexandria community.



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The County's Stormwater Planning Division in DPWES is collaborating with the Army Corps of Engineers on a study project to mitigate the flooding potential and update the evacuation plan for the Belle View/New Alexandria community.

## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- A Riverwatch listserv was created and a special hurricane communication plan has been developed and implemented for those communities.



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A RiverWatch listserv also was created and a special hurricane communication plan was developed and implemented for residents in those communities.

We hold regular meetings to communicate with residents in those affected areas.

## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Solid Waste Division (DPWES) – installed radiological detectors at the landfill and transfer station to detect radioactive material in the waste stream resulting from terrorism.



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The Solid Waste Division installed radiological detectors at the landfill and transfer station to detect radioactive material in the waste stream resulting from terrorism.

DPWES has a Debris Management Plan and a contract in place for debris removal services with an outside contractor.

The background of the slide is a stylized American flag, featuring a blue field with white stars in the upper left and red and white stripes in the lower right.

## **Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?**

- The Police Department created a Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) to provide effective response to local organized crime and terrorist-related crime throughout the County.

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The Police Department created a Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) to provide effective response to local organized crime and terrorist-related crime throughout the County. The Intelligence Unit works directly with local and federal partners and has become a national model.



## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

Information Technology strategies and capabilities were expanded to provide advanced communications and data support for emergency response and related agencies.

- Enterprise technology infrastructure improvements for robust and secure transport and data exchange.
- Geographic Information System (GIS).
- Telecommunications enhancements.
- Radio systems supporting emergency response.



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We have created a policy for securing the County's technology investments and established a mandatory IT security training program for all users of County systems.

Major investments have been made in the Public Safety radio system, the County's fiber network, Emergency Alert Network, Information Security systems and GIS.

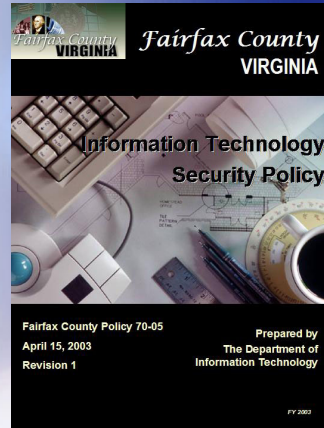
The County's telecommunications strategy greatly enhances call handling and distribution capabilities to support communication with the public during emergencies (faster set-up of hotlines and call centers specific to emergency situations; better integration with data systems that agencies use to provide response and reporting).



## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

A best practices information security architecture has been implemented that protects the County's systems from unauthorized access and malicious activity. These include:

- Intrusion Detection.
- Virus and Spam Management Systems.
- Expanded Firewall Capability.
- Routine Risk Assessments.
- Vigorous IT Security Policy and Enforcement.



We have put systems on the County's network that monitor and filter attempted or actual incidents that will threaten County systems. Emergency response depends on automation, and malicious hacking and viruses can render County systems inoperable.

We perform risk assessments to determine our vulnerability and mitigate potential threats.

Our program is also aligned with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's cyber security threat protection initiatives.

## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Information Systems Disaster Recovery Plan and capabilities have been enhanced to maintain operational stability aligned with the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).
- Expanded systems support for off-site back-up center and tape storage vault.



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One of the primary technology lessons learned from 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina was the need for secure, non-localized systems back-up.

The County's data center hosts systems and servers that support a variety of public safety and emergency management systems and communications tools. We have expanded our disaster recovery off-site strategy to increase the capacity for quick and transparent return to service in the event the main data center is destroyed or rendered unusable.

## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Fairfax County was the first county in Virginia to be recognized by the National Weather Service as “Storm Ready.”



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Fairfax County was the first county in Virginia to be accredited by the commonwealth of Virginia as “Storm Ready.”

This nationwide program helps communities better protect their residents during severe weather by being more proactive in improving their hazardous weather operations. The Storm Ready program focuses on improving communication and preparedness in communities through outreach and public awareness education. Communities who are a part of this program are even more prepared for all types of severe weather, because they have detailed and clear guidance to improve procedures and formalize plans for hazardous weather situations.

As part of the County’s accreditation, 500 weather radios were purchased and distributed to County facilities. The Department of Homeland Security has identified the NOAA Radio Network as a primary method for sharing homeland security information with the public in the event of an emergency.

Fairfax County also hosted two “Power and Critical Infrastructure Summits” with key utility and infrastructure groups that led to greatly improved working relationships.

## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Agency and County plans have been developed, tested and refined.
- Agency plans specifically outline internal policies and procedures in areas of responsibility as outlined in the Emergency Operation Plan.
- Emergency Response Plans.
- Emergency Response Coordinators.

For security reasons, many County and agency plans are not available for public dissemination.

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Agency and County plans have also been developed, tested and refined. At the agency level, these plans specifically outline the agency's internal policies and procedures for their areas of responsibility as outlined by the County's Emergency Operation Plan.

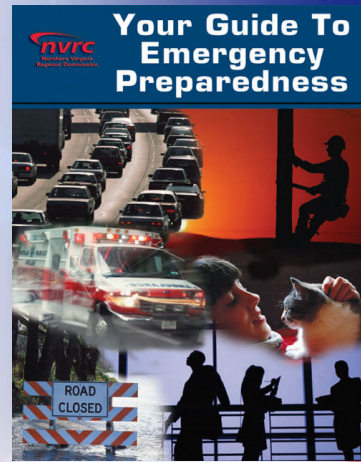
Each Board member has a binder accompanying this presentation that includes a copy of the Emergency Operation Plan, as well as a list of County plans. Some of the County's plans are included; a number of others are only referenced since many of the County's plans are public safety related and are not available for public dissemination for security reasons.

County agencies have developed Emergency Response Teams, appointed an Emergency Response Coordinator and written Emergency Response Plans for all County work sites. These Emergency Response Plans are separate from the County's Emergency Operation Plan and are site-specific and provide guidelines for responding to an emergency situation at a County work site, especially during the first 10 minutes of an emergency.

The County's Safety Manager and others work with agencies to keep their Emergency Response Plans current, and to conduct training and provide guidance on the Emergency Response Plans as well as conduct semi-annual drills.

## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Increased public outreach, including the Northern Virginia regional “Your Guide to Emergency Preparedness.”



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The County took the lead in producing the Northern Virginia regional “Your Guide to Emergency Preparedness” that was distributed to all County households through the Washington Post, as well as at community meetings and posted on the County’s Web site.

This was just one example of the increased public outreach and education about emergency preparedness undertaken since 9/11.



## Where is Fairfax County Since 9/11?

- Patriot Challenge exercised numerous County agencies.
- Community Services Board and the Police Department are among agencies that conduct regular exercises.



Chairman Gerald E. Connolly briefs staff during the County's Patriot Challenge 05 emergency exercise held at George Mason University.

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Exercises and trainings are an important part of our readiness efforts. In the last year alone, the AEOC has been used over 130 times for County, State or Federal training sessions and agency meetings related to emergency preparedness and homeland security.

One of the most recent large-scale exercises was the County's "Patriot Challenge 05" exercise that involved an explosion scenario at the Patriot Center at George Mason University. It is through such trainings that County staff have the ability to interact with each other and test action plans and procedures in a safe environment.

These are not all of the County's trainings and exercises. For example, the Police Department, since 9/11, has held over 200 emergency preparedness related training courses available for all of its staff. The Police also conduct annual spring and fall readiness drills for over 200 members of their Civil Disturbance Unit; partnered with School security to update the operations plans for all schools and trained all School Resource Officers; and have on six occasions conducted actual large-scale deployments with regional partners. Also the Community Services Board has held multiple drills on emergency planning and State licensure mandates while public information officers throughout the County have undergone training on the National Incident Management System and the Virtual Joint Information Center.



The background of the slide is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes in shades of blue, white, and red. The text is centered over the white star field.

## **Who is in Charge?**

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Based on observations from the situation in New Orleans, one of the main questions that seems to be asked is “Who is or was in charge?”

This has a fairly straightforward answer for Fairfax County...

## Who is in Charge?

- County Executive serves as the Director of Emergency Management. (Va. Code Ann. § 44-146.19)
- Fairfax County Ordinance (Chapter 14) identifies the County Executive as the Director of Emergency Management.
- Deputy County Executive is designated Deputy Director of Emergency Management.
- Emergency Management Coordinator manages day-to-day emergency management activities.



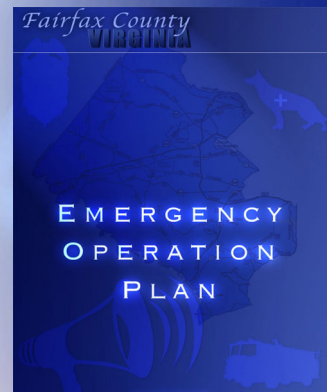
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As County Executive, I am Fairfax County's Director of Emergency Management as outlined by both Virginia Law and Chapter 14 of the Fairfax County Ordinance. Deputy County Executive Rob Stalzer is designated as the Deputy Director of Emergency Management.

OEM's Emergency Management Coordinator (Doug Bass) manages the day-to-day operations of emergency management; advises the Director of Emergency Management and agency heads during emergencies and manages the County's AEOC.

## Who is in Charge?

- The County's Emergency Operation Plan establishes the legal and organizational basis for operations in Fairfax County in response to any type of disaster or large-scale emergency situation.



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The County's Emergency Operation Plan outlines the areas of responsibility for County agencies when responding to disaster or large-scale emergency situations. The plan establishes the legal and organizational basis for operations in Fairfax County and is updated on a regular basis.

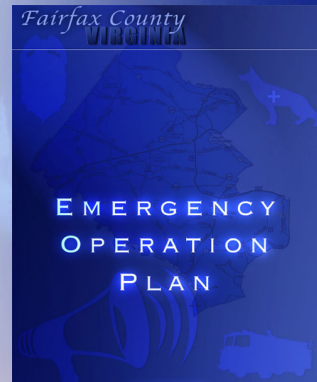
The plan assigns broad responsibilities to local government agencies and support organizations for disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. These responsibilities are generally extensions of normal or routine functions involving the same personnel and material resources. This means that if you are in charge of communications on a day-to-day basis, then you are in charge of communications during an emergency event.

All County agencies are to have plans and procedures in place to fulfill their obligations to the Emergency Operation Plan.

As part of the letter of agreement signed by myself and the commonwealth of Virginia, which is required to receive the local emergency management performance grant (approx. \$60,000), the County is required to complete certain work elements, which includes an annual review and update of the Emergency Operation Plan. The Virginia Code also says that "each jurisdiction shall prepare and keep current a local...emergency operations plan" and that "all political subdivisions are required to provide an annually updated emergency management assessment to the State Coordinator of Emergency Management by July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year."

## Who is in Charge?

- Continuity of Operations (COOP) is critical to the successful execution of disaster operations.
- The plan also identifies lines of succession in anticipation of any contingency that might result in the unavailability of the ranking member of the administrative hierarchy.



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Continuity of operations is a critical element to the successful execution of disaster operations. The Emergency Operation Plan identifies lines of succession in anticipation of any contingency that might result in the unavailability of the ranking member of the administrative hierarchy.

Many County agencies also have their own Continuity of Operations plans, which further defines their agency's roles and responsibilities for continuing their business line of work during an emergency.

## Who is in Charge?

- The County's Department of Housing and Community Development and the Redevelopment and Housing Authority partner with the American Red Cross on short- and long-term shelter and housing needs.
- Fairfax Families Care initiative for Hurricane Katrina evacuees exemplifies County coordination.

**FAIRFAX FAMILIES CARE**  
FAMILIES TO FAMILIES ... SCHOOLS TO SCHOOLS ...

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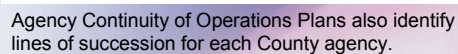
Fairfax County is fortunate in that we partner with a number of successful organizations for the delivery of shelter and short- and long-term housing solutions in the event of an emergency.

The County's Redevelopment and Housing Authority and Department of Housing and Community Development, in conjunction with the American Red Cross, are resources should housing/shelter solutions be necessary.

Should a large-scale event occur that would affect large numbers of County residents, the County's Department of Family Services, School representatives, the Red Cross and others would also set up special emergency shelters, most likely in public facilities, such as County schools and other County facilities. We have pre-planned for a number of shelters within the County, usually at the public schools. We do not publish a list of them because they would only be opened on a situational basis. We do not want people to plan on a specific shelter because it may have been compromised by the incident at hand. We would announce available shelters as the need arose through the media and the Community Emergency Alert Network system.

An example of the close collaboration to meet such housing needs is Fairfax Families Care, a coalition providing support through County agencies working with such organizations as the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce and members of the faith community to provide housing solutions to those in need.

- Emergencies are managed the same as day-to-day operations.
- The Emergency Operation Plan, in conjunction with agency plans and procedures, outlines roles and responsibilities.





## Who is in Charge?

- Everyone has a role in emergencies:
  - Board of Supervisors
  - County Executive
  - County Staff



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The Board of Supervisors has a role in communicating with the public. Board members are the public face of the government and they can help ease public concern and give guidance on how to respond during an emergency event. One example was during Hurricane Isabel when many residents called their Supervisor to find out news and information, instructions on what to do and where to find help. The Board also hosts community meetings after events, such as meetings with the Belle View/New Alexandria residents and the Pleasant Valley area following a localized tornado.

The Board also plays a key role in helping to educate our residents. Town meetings and other gatherings by Supervisors are important events where Board members can explain what the County is doing in the area of emergency management and provide emergency preparedness information to our residents.

I am empowered to declare a Local Emergency, which needs to be ratified by the Board of Supervisors at the Board's first meeting after such a declaration or at a special meeting within 14 days, whichever is first. I made such a declaration prior to Hurricane Isabel coming to Northern Virginia so that I could declare the need for the evacuation.

As Director of Emergency Management for Fairfax County, I can declare an evacuation that applies to Fairfax County only. I did issue such an order when it became clear that portions of Belle View and New Alexandria in the County were going to flood during Hurricane Isabel.

County staff provide the emergency response to a situation and I'm proud of the dedication and commitment of County employees to provide the necessary support to our residents during times of need.

## Who is in Charge?

- Everyone has a role in emergencies:
  - Residents
  - Businesses
  - Nonprofits, faith community & others



Residents also have an obligation to be prepared for an emergency situation by being self-sufficient for three days, including having adequate food and water supplies, clothing, medications and other personal needs. This was the message in the County's recent "Ready... Pack... Go" emergency preparedness campaign conducted in the faith community and later expanded to the business community.

Residents should also make a plan, which was promoted last month during both the "National Preparedness Month" and "Fairfax Prepares Month" campaigns as part of the "Be Ready. Make a Plan" promotion throughout the National Capital Region.

## Who is in Charge?

- All emergencies are local.
- There is a regularly identified system for requesting resources:
  - Local to Local.
  - Local to State.
  - State to Federal.
- EMAC: Emergency Management Assistance Compact.
  - State-to-State requests.



Deputy County Executive Rob Stalzer led the second Northern Virginia regional team to New Orleans. Also pictured is Jeff Smithberger (DPWES), Bill MacKay (OEM), Suzanne Devlin (Police) and Mike Wood (Fire) were part of the first regional team deployed (below).



Using Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as examples, all emergency responses begin at the local level. However, when a local jurisdiction determines that it no longer has adequate resources to manage the event, the locality can request assistance from other localities or from the State. Once the State has been notified and provides assistance, if it no longer has adequate resources to manage the event, the state contacts the federal government for assistance.

Should we have an emergency and need resources, we could seek assistance through various Memoranda of Understanding and Mutual Aid agreements, as well as through the Virginia Statewide Mutual Aid Compact. If necessary, Virginia could seek assistance from other states under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Federal officials are in place at the state emergency operations center and can begin work to immediately fill resource requests from local jurisdictions upon request at the state level.

Procedures have been developed for such requests. An example is the County's assistance to Gulf Coast residents, where we provided personnel for two Northern Virginia Regional Teams in accordance with the Emergency Management Assistance Compact.

One question that has been raised lately is, "What if the federal government doesn't respond?" Because of our location and proximity to the nation's capital, we don't have to worry as much about that possibility as other localities across the country. The Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region was established to plan and coordinate for homeland defense and civil support operations in the National Capital Region (NCR). It is the U.S. Department of Defense's unity of effort in the NCR to safeguard the nation's capital. Maj. Gen. Guy C. Swan III is the new commander of both the Military District of Washington and the Joint Force Headquarters-National Capital Region. He recently met with CAOs from the NCR, and he will soon be scheduling meetings with regional elected officials to discuss the coordinated capabilities of the federal government.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's counterpart is the Office of National Capital Region Coordination. Director Thomas J. Lockwood works closely with me and the rest of the region to help coordinate efforts toward a safe and secure NCR. Both of these federal offices make possible a timely response by the federal government to requests for action to save lives, prevent human suffering or mitigate great property damage.

## **What is the National Incident Management System (NIMS)?**

*"...a consistent nationwide approach for federal, state, tribal and local governments to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity."*

*Homeland Security Presidential Directive - 5*

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One of the reasons Fairfax County was able to support and provide personnel for the Northern Virginia Regional Teams that went to New Orleans to support their emergency operations center was because the County and region participate in the National Incident Management System, or NIMS, which provides a consistent nationwide approach for federal, state, tribal, and local governments to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for and respond to all hazards, including acts of terrorism, no matter the cause or complexity.

NIMS is not only about response – it is also about preparedness, prevention, recovery and mitigation. Built on the foundation of existing systems, NIMS integrates best practices developed over the years and represents a core set of doctrines, concepts, principles, terminologies and processes.

Fairfax County will formally adopt NIMS in order to meet requirements outlined in the National Response Plan and Presidential Directives.

- Use of the National Response Plan, Incident Command Structure (ICS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS).



Together, the National Response Plan and NIMS integrate the capabilities and resources of all levels of government, emergency response disciplines, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector into a cohesive, coordinated and seamless national framework for incident management.



## Who is in Charge?

### National Capital Region

- Regional Emergency Support Functions: County staff chair nine of the 15:
  - Communications Infrastructure (RESF-2).
  - Fire, Technical Rescue and HAZMAT (RESFs-4, 9 & 10).
  - Emergency Managers (RESF-5).
  - Resource Support (RESF-7).
  - Health, Mental Health and Medical Services (RESF-8).
  - Energy (RESF-12).
  - Media Relations and Community Outreach (RESF-14).



Fairfax Water also chairs Public Works and Engineering (RESF-3).

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The RESFs, or Regional Emergency Support Functions, are how emergency responses are structured, based on the National Response Plan and NIMS. The RESF structure is also part of the COG Regional Emergency Coordination Plan for the National Capital Region.

The National Capital Region is defined in the United States Code as the District of Columbia; Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties in Virginia; and all cities in Maryland or Virginia in the geographic area bounded by the outer boundaries of the combined area of the counties listed.

The Fairfax County Emergency Operation Plan itself has 12 emergency support functions, and we also participate across the National Capital Region in the regional emergency support functions. In fact, of the 15 regional support functions, Fairfax County has taken leadership roles on nine of the groups, indicating the strong leadership position the County has in the National Capital Region.

In addition, I currently Chair the Chief Administrative Officers group and Chairman Connolly is the Vice-Chair of the regional Emergency Preparedness Council. Supervisor Kauffman plays a key role in transportation as Chair of the WMATA Board.

## Evacuation



Houston, TX, Sept. 21, 2005 – Traffic on US 45 was mostly out of town, to the north, as Galveston citizens evacuated the coastal flood plains. The recent landfall of Hurricane Katrina near New Orleans had people hurrying to prepare for Hurricane Rita. Photo by Ed Edahl/FEMA

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One of the recent lessons learned by emergency managers across the country is in the area of a full-scale evacuation of residents. We all watched as thousands upon thousands of Houston-area residents tried to leave the area as Hurricane Rita approached.

Fairfax County has long discussed evacuation planning and the Emergency Operation Plan addresses our evacuation plans. The County's Department of Transportation participates in the monthly Northern Virginia Transportation Commission exercises where regional transportation carriers exercise and discuss different emergency scenarios. DOT also participates in quarterly meetings sponsored by WMATA that bring together National Capital Region transit providers.

Fairfax County is part of the National Capital Region and would also follow the "Regional Emergency Evacuation Transportation Coordination Annex" of the COG "Regional Emergency Coordination Plan."

And should any evacuation lead to the need for temporary shelter for evacuees, the County also has a Statement of Understanding with the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross to provide emergency shelters in case of an evacuation.

## Evacuation

- Residents should plan to **stay put unless told otherwise** to leave by County Government officials.
- Most likely evacuations would be selected or staged, not full scale.



The Virginia Department of Transportation, which owns and maintains County roads, is working with D.C. and other jurisdictions on evacuation planning, especially in light of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

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For the majority of emergencies, any evacuation would most likely be selected or staged and not a full-scale evacuation.

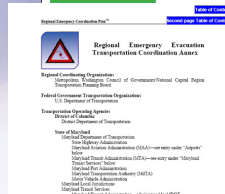
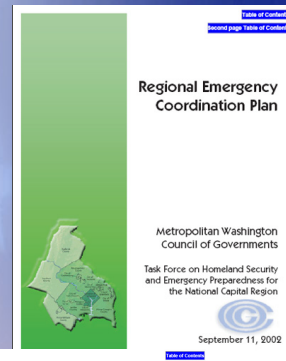
That is the reason we ask residents to **stay put unless told otherwise**, a very clear message to the public that is easily understood. Because of this we ask residents to have on hand their emergency preparedness kit complete with adequate supplies of water, food and other items.

We also encourage residents to know the emergency plans for their children's schools, so that in case of an event, residents are not driving to schools to pick up children already in a safe environment and adding to traffic gridlock that first responders must navigate.

One of the things everyone saw from New Orleans was that many residents did not have the means to leave the city prior to Hurricane Katrina. Fairfax County is in a much better situation in that most of our residents have the means to leave, and only need to be told when and where to go. However, we must work to ensure that those in our community without transportation are not neglected or forgotten.

## Evacuation

- If there is a major event in the region, the County coordinates with VDOT, other jurisdictions and regional partners.
- County is a partner in the development and continued review of a regional emergency coordination plan and an evacuation annex.



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A full-scale evacuation would most likely involve some, if not all, of the jurisdictions in the National Capital Region. That is why if such an event would occur, the County would work closely with other NCR jurisdictions and the Virginia Department of Transportation, or VDOT.

VDOT is already working with officials from the District of Columbia on evacuation planning and any such evacuations here in Fairfax County would also be coordinated with VDOT, since they own and maintain the roads in the County as well as across the state.

County officials also work with VDOT to review current plans and scenarios. We already know about HOV lanes that could be used, as well as directional traffic lanes and other options that could be utilized during an emergency evacuation.

We work closely with VDOT officials to determine evacuation needs and routes based on past events, risk assessments of future events and planning assumptions. This coordination with VDOT is facilitated by its presence in the County's AEOC, as well as the planned co-location of VDOT and Virginia State Police dispatchers in the future Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center.

The Police Department has also worked with WMATA on plans associated with all Metro stations in the County to include the mass movement of people from the Metro stations.



## Evacuation

- Three types of evacuations:
  - **Selected evacuation** – One neighborhood, ZIP code or community is evacuated.
  - **Staged evacuation** – Multiple neighborhoods, ZIP codes or communities are evacuated in a staged manner; one area leaves first, followed by another, etc.
  - **Full-scale evacuation** – Everyone leaves all at the same time.

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It is unlikely there will be a major evacuation in Fairfax County. We most likely will be encouraging our residents to “stay put unless told otherwise” and to monitor the local media for news and information.

There are, however, three types of evacuation scenarios possible in Fairfax County, which would be handled by County public safety agencies:

- **Selected evacuation** – only one area is evacuated. We saw this here in Fairfax County during Hurricane Isabel when the Belle View / New Alexandria communities were evacuated.
- **Staged evacuation** – This is where one area or neighborhood leaves first, followed by another, etc. This is much like a large dinner when table one goes to the buffet first, followed by table two, table three, etc.
- **Full-scale evacuation** – This is an evacuation where everyone goes all at once, like we witnessed with Hurricane Rita in Houston. As we saw in media accounts, since residents were fleeing all at once, there was gridlock and cars ran out of gas.



## Evacuation

- County's Emergency Operation Plan identifies the FCPS bus fleet as the primary means to provide assistance for residents without a means of transportation during an evacuation.



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If an evacuation of residents is necessary, the County's public safety agencies are responsible according to the Police Department's Emergency Operations Manual.

The County's Emergency Operation Plan also identifies school buses from the Fairfax County Public Schools, the 12th largest school system in the nation with approximately 1,600 school buses, as the primary means of transporting those in need during an evacuation.

For residents without their own transportation, the County has a public transit provider in the Fairfax Connector. Residents in the County and region also have access to Metro buses and trains, as well as the Virginia Railway Express, although it should be noted that these public transportation resources would also be used by residents of other jurisdictions throughout the National Capital Region.

## Evacuation

- Fairfax County Public School buses are also identified in the County's Emergency Operation Plan for transporting people with special needs.



The Emergency Operation Plan also identifies public school buses as the means of transportation for people with special needs.

FASTRAN buses and Connector buses are additional secondary resources that can be used by and for people with disabilities.

FASTRAN buses are currently being used to assist evacuees from Hurricane Katrina who have moved to Fairfax County.

The background of the slide is a stylized American flag, with the stars and stripes visible. The text is overlaid on this background.

## Evacuation

- The County prioritizes people who need special assistance.
- People with disabilities need to self-identify, prior to and during an emergency.
- State laws and regulations require that nursing homes, hospitals, licensed day-care centers and other private facilities have evacuation plans.

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Our County agencies work with people with special needs on a daily basis and know many of them by name, which helps facilitate special transportation requests. During an evacuation, the County prioritizes people needing special assistance and this coordination is done through the AEOC where representatives from the various agencies can work side-by-side.

However, people needing special assistance should also plan on self-identifying prior to an emergency with their advocacy organization, and most importantly, with the Department of Public Safety Communications, which can enter their information into the 9-1-1 Center's computer system with what's called a "location of interest." But people with special needs should also plan to self-identify during an event to ensure that public safety personnel and first responders are fully aware of everyone with needs.

We recognize that the County does not have enough officers to go to every location, however, we would utilize what resources we have and request help from the Fire Department, then from the Commonwealth for the Virginia State Police and the National Guard.

Currently the Community Services Board, Department of Family Services and the Health Department are working to plan for people with special needs. The County's Department of Housing and Community Development is also working with OEM to develop evacuation plans for Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority properties.

State laws and regulations require that nursing homes, hospitals, licensed day-care centers and other private facilities have their own evacuation plans.

## Medical Dispensing Sites

- Staged vaccination.
- Residents would travel to dispensing sites – at County high schools – via FCPS school buses.
- FCPS Web site and County Web site would publish emergency bus routes.
- Public Affairs personnel would work with area media to publicize the pick-up schedule for residents through normal communication channels.

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Another scenario with huge transportation implications is the movement of the entire population of Fairfax County to and from mass medication dispensing sites in case of a bioterrorism attack that requires medication be distributed in as little as three to five days. Residents would be instructed through the media when and where to go. So as to not overwhelm the transportation system and dispensing sites, reporting to the sites would be staged based on the first letter of the resident's last name.

The Health Department Emergency Operation Plan identifies 24 high schools as dispensing site locations, staffed primarily by Medical Reserve Corps volunteers. The plan also identifies County school buses as the means of transportation. Residents would be picked up at the high school bus stops and transported to and from the nearest high school. In the event that the plan is activated, information on these routes would be posted on the School system's and County's Web sites, in addition to the County's normal channels for communicating news and information to residents. (These routes are not now publicly available for security reasons.)

The Fairfax County Public School Web site also has a boundary locator service where residents can enter in their street address and identify the school nearest them. And of course the County's public affairs resources would work with area media to publicize instructions to the public about transportation to the nearest dispensing site.

One site in Fairfax County has been identified as one of several in the National Capital Region to receive the Strategic National Stockpile for areas affected by a medical emergency. The stockpile, owned by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, would supply the medications to support mass dispensing sites, as well as provide a range of medical equipment and supplies necessary to care for the ill or injured. The County currently is home to a regional stockpile of emergency medical supplies and equipment that's available to respond to a major mass casualty incident.

These assets, like other federal requests, would be requested through the same channels – local request to the state, state request to the federal government.

To look for unusual patterns or illness possibly related to a naturally occurring diseases or bioterrorism attack, the Health Department has been coordinating with other health departments in the National Capital Region since 2001 to conduct daily syndromic surveillance of hospital emergency department patients. This capability has recently been enhanced through the implementation of a regional electronic surveillance and notification system.

The background of the slide is a stylized American flag, featuring a blue field with white stars in the upper left and red and white stripes in the lower right. The text "Special Populations" is centered in the white star field.

## **Special Populations**

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As observed during Hurricane Katrina, many special populations were severely affected. We acknowledge the importance of serving this group of people and recognize that the County needs to improve on our capabilities, but we are continually working to make strides in our efforts to serve every resident, as well as the animal population, of Fairfax County.



The background of the slide is a stylized American flag, featuring a blue field with white stars in the upper left and red and white stripes in the lower right. The text is overlaid on this background.

## **Special Populations**

- People reliant on public transportation.
- People with disabilities.
- People communicating in languages other than English.
- People who are economically disadvantaged.
- People who are incarcerated.
- People affected by the Digital Divide.
- People in medical facilities.
- Animals.

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These populations include:

- People that are reliant on public transportation.
- People with disabilities.
- People who communicate in languages other than English.
- People in our community who are economically disadvantaged.
- The incarcerated.
- Those affected by the Digital Divide.
- People in medical facilities.
- Animals.

## People Reliant on Public Transportation

- According to the County's Emergency Operation Plan, transportation for those without cars and the special-needs populations would be provided by Fairfax County Public School buses, with secondary support from Fairfax Connector and FASTRAN buses.



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As stated earlier, the County's Emergency Operation Plan identifies County school buses as the primary means of transporting those without transportation as well as the special needs population during an evacuation. Fairfax Connector and FASTRAN are secondary agencies providing transportation assistance.

## People With Disabilities

- 61 percent of people with disabilities have not made plans to quickly and safely evacuate their homes. \*
- According to U.S. Census Data, 54 million Americans – or approximately 1/5 of the population – have a disability.\* That means that in Fairfax County, approximately 200,000 people have a disability.

\* According to the National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness Initiative.

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The County has worked to meet the communication needs of those in our community with special needs according to the National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness Initiative. These include the use of a "crawl" message on Channel 16 in a different area than would be used for closed-captioning messages; the use of dedicated TTY numbers or the Virginia Relay Service, and the promotion of those numbers on all news releases and information; the provision of information in alternate formats; ensuring that emergency shelter locations are accessible to people with disabilities; and an accessible Web site – the County's Web developers follow the World Wide Web Consortium's priority one level for accessibility in the design of the County's Web site.

Our Office of Emergency Management continues to plan and work with members of the disability community, including these groups in emergency exercise planning as well as meeting with disability groups on a regular basis to explain new communication tools, such as CEAN, as well as to learn of special needs within that population group.

Additionally, staff from numerous County agencies, including Risk Management, Public Affairs and the Community Services Board, attended the recent Inclusive Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning Conference for the National Capital Region. It is through such events that County staff form valuable partnerships with disability organizations and become involved with these organizations on a daily basis in planning and preparing for a possible emergency situation.

## Language Other Than English

- Regional “Your Guide to Emergency Preparedness” is available online in seven languages:

- Arabic
- Chinese
- English
- Farsi
- Korean
- Spanish
- Vietnamese



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The regional “Your Guide to Emergency Preparedness” was produced in seven languages – Arabic, Chinese, English, Farsi, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese – and is available on the County’s Web site ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov)).

The “Ready... Pack... Go” campaign, which was mentioned earlier, is another example of how the County worked to provide emergency preparedness information in another language (Spanish).

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## **Language Other Than English**

- Language Access Coordinator position created.
- Language Line and translation service contracts.

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To improve services for people for whom English is not their native language, the County created a Language Access position in June 2002. Since this position was created, the incumbent works on a day-to-day basis with County agencies to properly document and translate publications and materials into various languages. The position also works with our Purchasing Department to ensure instant access to translation services through the establishment of several County contracts for these services.

For day-to-day operations, as well as during emergencies when the County's emergency information hotline is expanded to 24 lines, the County uses Language Line services, which connect a third party translator to the phone line to handle immediate translation needs. The County also has contracts in place for quick translation of documents. Both of these are examples of how the Language Access position has streamlined the process so that the County has the tools in place to more easily communicate in other languages during a fast-moving emergency situation.



## **Economically Disadvantaged**

- In 2003... 4.2 percent of the County's population were below the federal poverty level, which is defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as \$19,350 per year for a family of four.

### Sources:

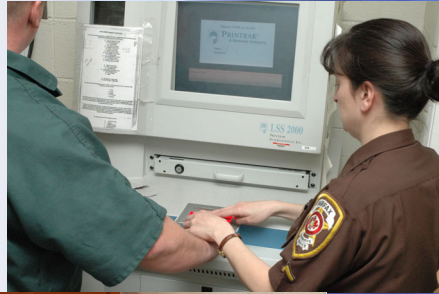
- Department of Systems Management for Human Services.
- U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990 and 2000 Decennial Censuses 2001 Supplementary Census Survey.
- 2002-2003 American Community Surveys.

We recognize that even here in Fairfax County, in 2003, 4.2 percent of our population were below the federal poverty level, which is defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as \$19,350 per year for a family of four.

The Community Services Board Governing Board has already begun conversations about how to reach those members of our community who are economically disadvantaged and simply cannot afford access to such tools as cell phones, text messaging, pagers, Internet access or wireless devices.

## Incarcerated

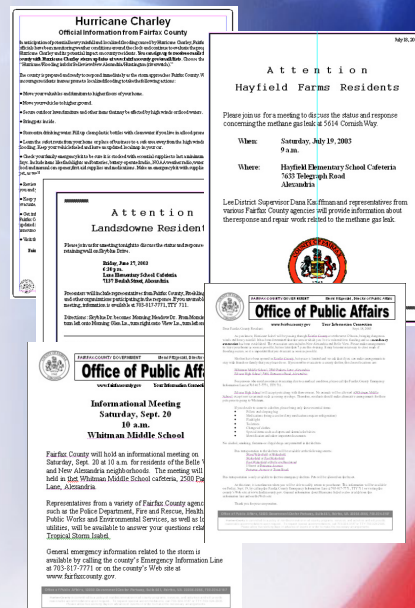
- Sheriff's Office was the first in the nation to conduct a full-scale evacuation exercise of its correctional facility.



The Fairfax County Office of the Sheriff has developed plans to evacuate inmates in the event of a natural disaster, bioterrorism incident, terrorist attack or other kinds of emergencies. In fact, the County's Sheriff's Office was the first in the nation to conduct a full-scale evacuation exercise of its correctional facility. This exercise was conducted last October, and since then, jurisdictions from across the country have consulted with the Sheriff on developing their own exercises.

## Digital Divide

- For people without Internet access, one of the ways the County reaches residents is by having staff go door-to-door handing out fliers, as was done during Hurricane Isabel and other events.



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Many forms of communication are required that are not dependent on technology. Not only do we need to ensure that those in our community without access to the Internet can receive messages – such as through our CEAN or Riverwatch listserve – but also numerous forms of notification are needed should we lose electricity in an emergency.

One of the ways the County accomplishes this is door-to-door, face-to-face communication. During Hurricane Isabel, and other emergency situations, public safety personnel canvassed neighborhoods distributing fliers and providing information to ease public concern about the situation and give guidance on what they should do during that time.

For emergency preparedness information, the County's 30 kiosks, located in libraries and other government buildings, also automatically show the same information as the County's Web site and are available to residents across the County without Internet access. Access Fairfax in the South County Center also has 14 publicly accessible computers for residents to conduct County business, as well as access emergency preparedness information from the County Web site and the Internet should they not have Internet access or a computer in their home. Kiosks and Access Fairfax should be used prior to an emergency for residents to get preparedness information. During an emergency, we of course, want residents to "stay put unless told otherwise."

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## **People in Medical Facilities**

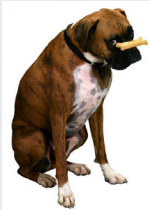
- State laws and regulations require that nursing homes, hospitals, licensed day-care centers and other private facilities have evacuation plans.

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State laws and regulations require that nursing homes, hospitals, licensed day-care centers and other private facilities have their own evacuation plans.

## Animals

- Pets are family members too.
- If an evacuation is necessary, evacuate your pets. Leaving pets behind is likely to result in their being injured, lost or worse.
- Have a safe place to take your pets.
- Assemble a pet emergency supply kit.



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As witnessed with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, pets are an important part of our lives and we realize that many residents will simply not leave their homes without their pets.

Because of the importance of pets in our daily lives, a draft Pet Protection Plan is currently being reviewed by OEM and the Police Department. And in the event that emergency shelters are opened in Fairfax County, we make every attempt to use facilities where pets can be accommodated.

According to the American Red Cross, should an evacuation or emergency shelter become necessary, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them, too. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is likely to result in their being injured, lost or worse.

You will want to have a safe place to take your pets. Hotels and motels outside your immediate area may accept pets or you could ask if "no pet" policies could be waived in an emergency. Keep a list of "pet friendly" places, including phone numbers, with other disaster information and supplies. If you have notice of an impending disaster, call ahead for reservations. Ask friends, relatives, or others outside the affected area whether they could shelter your animals. Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could shelter animals in an emergency and include 24-hour phone numbers.

You also should assemble an emergency supply kit for your pets and include such items as medications and medical records; sturdy leashes and/or carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that they can't escape; current photos of your pets in case they get lost; food, potable water, bowls, cat litter and pan, and can opener; information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and number of your veterinarian in case you have to foster or board your pets; and if easily transportable, pet beds and toys.

Additional information on how to care for your pets during an emergency is available from the American Red Cross, The Humane Society of the United States and The American Veterinary Medical Association.

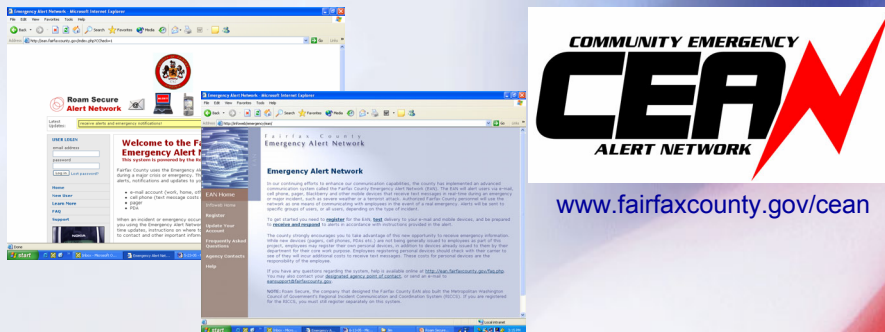




I mentioned various forms of communication previously. I'd like to take a moment to highlight some of the ways in which the County communicates internally to provide response and recovery, as well as resources the County uses to communicate with its residents during an emergency or time of crisis.

## Communications

- CEAN – Community Emergency Alert Network
- EAN – Emergency Alert Network



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The Community Emergency Alert Network, or CEAN, provides a means to get notifications and emergency alerts to residents via e-mail, cell phone and pager. Alerts are emergency in nature, and residents can also sign up for special alert categories as well – severe traffic, severe weather (either during business hours or 24/7) and County government closings and delays.

I would encourage anyone watching or listening to this presentation who has not already registered on the CEAN, to do so today. Just go to the Web page: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean). It's free and registration is simple.

The EAN, or Emergency Alert Network, is the County's internal notification and alert system that is also used to notify public safety response teams and specialized units about events or to activate personnel for response.

## Communications

- Fairfax County Government  
Emergency Information Hotline  
703-817-7771, TTY 711



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The County has an emergency information hotline which on a normal basis provides pre-recorded preparedness information as well as the opportunity for residents to speak with someone.

During emergencies, capabilities can be increased to 24 incoming lines that are staffed with volunteer call takers provided by Volunteer Fairfax, one of the County's partner organizations, to provide 24/7 information to residents.

# Communications

## • County Web Site



[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency)



[www.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov)



[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem)

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The County's Web site and emergency information page are vital information sources for residents prior to an emergency, as well as during and after. For example, during severe weather events preparedness information can be found online. During events the Web site features the most current news releases, frequently asked questions, instructions for residents, as well as links to additional information and resources, such as telephone numbers that residents may call for more details.

## Communications

- Channel 16
- “Crawl” and full-screen emergency messages



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A valuable resource for County residents is Channel 16, which during severe weather or other emergencies will put a “crawl” message on the top of the television screen with important news, information or instructions as outlined in an emergency message procedural memorandum. This is mostly used during severe weather events to notify residents of County government closings or delays.

During a significant emergency, Channel 16 has the capability to pull current programming in favor of a full-screen text message. This was used during Hurricane Isabel when the County needed to relay details of a Health Department “Boil Water” announcement, with specific instructions for residents.

The Office of Public Affairs and the Office of Emergency Management also have the capability to override ALL programming through the Emergency Alert System during a severe emergency event.



## Communications

- Listserv (such as Riverwatch).
- Variable Message Signs.
- Emergency messages via National Weather Service radios.



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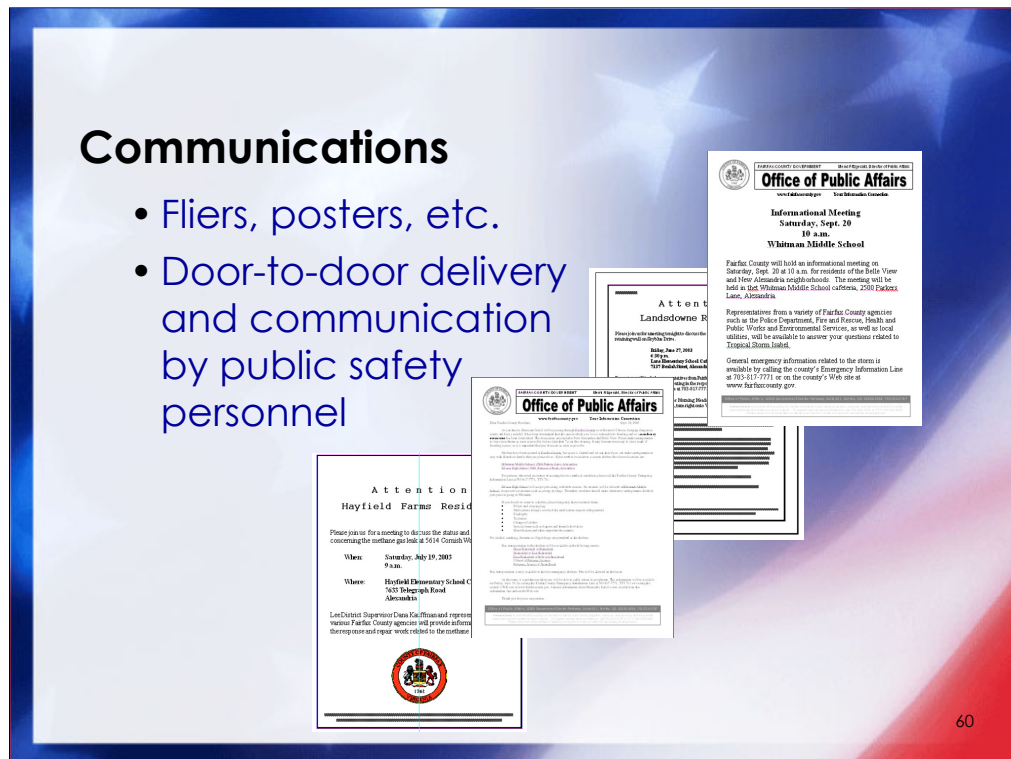
The County has worked closely with residents of the New Alexandria and Belle View neighborhoods to create a “Riverwatch” Listserv. This is an e-mail distribution list to residents of those communities that provides information during severe weather events that may cause localized flooding in those areas. The CEAN also has a category where residents in these areas can sign up to receive similar notices on their pagers and cell phone text messages. Both of these methods, and others, are outlined in the special hurricane communication plan that was developed for this area of the County.

An additional tool that has been helpful in many instances throughout the County are Variable Message Signs. These mobile signs are similar to what you see in highway construction sites flashing detour or construction information. These were used in the New Alexandria and Belle View neighborhoods during Hurricane Isabel and were highly effective at quickly providing news and information to County residents.

The County also has the ability to provide emergency messages through the National Weather Service, another important reason why we encourage residents to keep a battery-powered radio in their emergency supply kit.

## Communications

- Fliers, posters, etc.
- Door-to-door delivery and communication by public safety personnel



While technology is wonderful at helping to alert and notify residents, we still rely on the tried and true method of door-to-door communication with residents when necessary. For example, during Hurricane Isabel our public safety personnel went door-to-door distributing flyers and talking to residents about the ongoing weather event and the need to evacuate.

Another form of communication is the old-fashioned bull horn, which again can be effective as public safety personnel go door-to-door canvassing a neighborhood informing residents.

## Communications

- Area Media



The County works with area media on a day-to-day basis disseminating news and information that the media outlets provide to County residents. But this relationship is extremely important during an emergency as the media are often the primary means many residents have to receive news and instructions.

The Department of Transportation has a contract to purchase radio time on an area station in the event of severe weather affecting Fairfax Connector bus routes. The County's Office of Public Affairs is looking into establishing this same type of contractual arrangement to purchase air time during emergency events.

The County's press room, located near the AEOC, also offers media the opportunity to have access to emergency management leaders and staff during an emergency event to be able to quickly share the latest news and information with their audience.

## Communications

- Citizen Corps Programs
  - Neighborhood Watch
  - Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS)
  - Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
  - Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)



[www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org](http://www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org)



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The Office of Emergency Management oversees the County's Citizen Corps Council. The Citizen Corps Council's programs are:

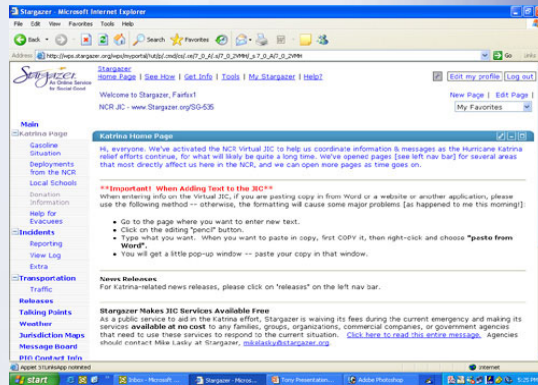
- Neighborhood Watch, in conjunction with the County Police Department.
- Volunteers in Police Service, in conjunction with the County Police Department.
- Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), in conjunction with the County Health Department.
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), in conjunction with the Fire and Rescue Department.

Additional County members on the Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council include the Board of Supervisors (represented by Chairman Connolly), Police, Fire and Rescue, Public Affairs, Health and Public Schools. Additional nonprofit organizations are represented, including George Mason University, Volunteer Fairfax, American Red Cross, Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce and many others.

# Communications

## National Capital Region

- Virtual Joint Information Center



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Staff from the County's Office of Public Affairs were involved in the design and creation of a Virtual Joint Information Center, a Web-based portal where public information officers from the National Capital Region can access and share news and information about local or regional events.

The Virtual Joint Information Center has areas for the exchange of news releases, key messages, as well as links to fact sheets from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; traffic cameras in Northern Virginia, D.C. and Maryland; and live satellite weather images and reports.

The Virtual Joint Information Center helps the region ensure that we have a "common message, many voices."



## **Communications**

### **National Capital Region**

- Dedicated public affairs contact to and from the Department of Homeland Security.



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Fairfax County's Director of Public Affairs Merni Fitzgerald is Chair of the Regional Emergency Support Function for Communications and Media Relations. In this role, she is the single point of contact for all Department of Homeland Security public affairs communications relating to emergency events in the National Capital Region. This role therefore requires regular contact with communicators across the entire NCR, but because of her leadership position, Fairfax County is also in a unique position to be among the first in the region to be informed of emergency situations.

## **Communications**

### **National Capital Region**

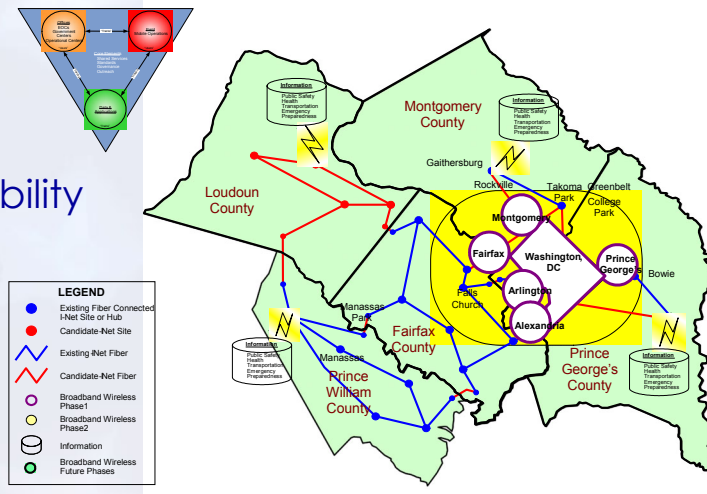
- RICCS – regional electronic communication network.



An important regional communication tool among first responders and jurisdictional staff is the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's (COG) RICCS – regional electronic communication network. RICCS is a method to notify key County personnel of a crisis or emergency and is a part of the COG Regional Emergency Coordination Plan.

# Communications National Capital Region

## National Capital Regional Interoperability Program



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Communications interoperability enhancements now allow for regional communications for command and field personnel with proven back-up capacity.

The National Capital Region also has underway several interoperability efforts. These include:

- Connecting Emergency Operation Centers by leveraging existing off-the-shelf solutions to seamlessly integrate the region's EOCs.
- Designing and procuring the I-Net, which is necessary for interconnection among the regional public network.
- Developing a pilot application for incident command and control management and sharing of public safety resources related to E9-1-1, and protocols for interoperating in a regional crisis.
- Designing a regional interoperable /interconnected broadband wireless network providing outdoor coverage for the NCR.
- Deploying a search capability to allow authorized users access to data housed in individual jurisdictions' locations, available to any browser-based user whether connected through the Internet or through a browser-compatible wireless service.

## Communications

### National Capital Region

- National Capital Region Radio Cache (UASI funded).
- 500 radios based in Fairfax County (Fire Department) – 1,250 total available to NCR first responders.



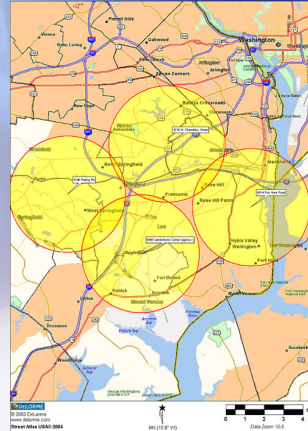
Communications among first responders and public safety officials is critical during an emergency, as witnessed in New Orleans when many of the police officers did not have radio equipment since their stations were under water.

Fairfax County hosts one of three National Capital Region radio caches of 500 radios for first responder use. An additional 500 radios are in Montgomery County, Maryland, with an additional 250 radios in the District of Columbia, giving the National Capital Region a capacity of 1,250 radios to activate if needed. This radio cache is just one example of how the region is using federal funding through the Urban Area Security Initiative, commonly referred to as UASI. And this radio cache helps with regional communication interoperability, a key area identified in almost every exercise or training event.

There are also mutual aid agreements for Northern Virginia Police to aid in communications, as well as interoperable radio frequency agreements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Interior.

# Communications

- Future Tools:
  - Highway Advisory Radio (HAR)
  - Reverse 911
  - EMnet (satellite)
  - Web EOC
  - XM Satellite Radio
  - 311
  - Outdoor Warning Devices for high hazard or urban areas



While we have many resources at hand to keep our residents safe and informed, the County is continually looking for additional ways to reach the over 1 million residents of Fairfax County. Future initiatives include:

- A Highway Advisory Radio project. To begin in the southeastern area of the County, including the flood-prone areas of Belle View and New Alexandria, phase one of the HAR project will give the County the ability to reach residents via a dedicated AM radio signal. Funding for the first phase was secured through the FY 2004 State Homeland Security Grant allocation process.
- Reverse 911 will be utilized by our Emergency Management Office, which will give the County the ability to call out to residents with instructions and alerts during an event specific to their neighborhood or ZIP code.
- The EMnet is a satellite-based form of communication for our Office of Public Affairs that will allow them to provide County news and information to area media.
- Web EOC is a software application that will connect emergency operation centers to allow regional interoperability throughout the National Capital Region, allowing emergency managers to stay in contact with their counterparts from other jurisdictions during an emergency event. Web EOC also addresses a need identified from previous training exercises and is being hosted for Northern Virginia by Fairfax County.
- EMnet and Web EOC are both additional examples of the National Capital Region cooperating and working together in the area of interoperability. And both projects are being funded with UASI monies.
- XM Satellite Radio is a means to provide yet another source of information for County residents. A subscription service, XM Satellite Radio will rebroadcast certain CEAN messages on their Channel 214, which is the Washington, D.C./Baltimore traffic and weather channel for XM Satellite Radio. This has actually moved from a future tool to a current tool, as the final arrangements were made and XM Radio will soon begin receiving our CEAN alerts for broadcast.
- 311 will also be a future tool to expand our emergency information hotline. By using an IVR feature with a 311 Call Center, we can connect callers with recorded information and direct lines to the call takers who will already be answering the emergency information hotline using a specific emergency knowledgebase – which also helps address the digital divide issue.
- Outdoor Warning Devices, or sirens, are another possible future tool. Even though the technology is not new, many times we find some of the “low tech” tools work best and we are looking into whether such warning devices for high hazard or urban areas would be beneficial.





## **Plan of Action**

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I appreciate your patience as I have tried to outline where the County has come from and where we are to date in our emergency preparedness and planning efforts. While we have made great strides throughout the County, I still believe that we have areas in which we can improve. What follows is a comprehensive plan of action that I bring to the Board of Supervisors....

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## **Plan of Action**

- Review the results of the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) process. Identify and obtain the resources needed to meet any gaps.
- Ensure that all County agencies have updated site specific plans.

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The County is currently participating in a UASI-funded regional assessment for the National Capital Region Emergency Management Accreditation Program, or EMAP, a voluntary review process for state and local emergency management programs.

One of the steps the County should take is to review the results of our current self-evaluation, identify needed resources and then work to close any gaps.

We should also work to ensure that all County agencies update site-specific emergency plans so that if all communication mechanisms fail, staff know how to proceed to secure their specific site and ensure the safety of staff and facility visitors.

## Plan of Action

- Create a position in the Office of Emergency Management to audit and assist with the County's emergency support function (ESF) planning and regional ESF planning and coordination.
- Take the lessons learned from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as well as from all the after-action reports from various exercises and real-world events, and improve the County's capabilities while closing the identified gaps.

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I have identified a position specifically to audit the County's emergency support functions and emergency planning. This position will identify steps needed as a result of a continued analysis of plans and procedures, and will augment efforts where necessary.

Part of this position's responsibilities would also be to look at lessons learned from events outside our area – such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita – as well as review the after-action reports from County and regional exercises and real-world events, and develop a mechanism to assess the County's capabilities, needs and identify any gaps.

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## Plan of Action

- Adopt best-practice, performance-based approaches to staffing, planning, equipping, training and exercising.
- Work with the School Superintendent to memorialize the various agreements with the school system, such as the use of school buses for evacuation purposes.

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Another important area as we continue to move forward with our emergency preparedness and planning, is the need to continually adopt best practices from other jurisdictions, and to always seek performance-based approaches to the County's staffing, planning, equipping, training and exercising. This could be another function of this position.

Because of the pictures and TV images of people trying to flee New Orleans and Houston only to be stuck in gridlock, evacuations are a topic of utmost importance to our residents. The County should continue to work closely with the Fairfax County Public School system to ensure that operational plans and procedures are updated on a regular basis. And as requested on September 26 by the Board of Supervisors, all operational agreements between the County and Schools should be written and signed by me and the School Superintendent, and be readily accessible to staff of either organization.

## Plan of Action

- Update the County's Emergency Operation Plan to be compliant with NIMS and the National Response Plan.
- Continue to support County staff as they perform key leadership roles in the region's emergency preparedness efforts.
- Continue to partner with groups such as the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington, homebuilders and the homebuilders association, property managers and others to investigate ways to provide emergency supply kits for new home owners and renters.

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The County's Emergency Operation Plan needs to be updated. Included in that update should be full compliance of the County's plan with the National Response Plan, including NIMS and ICS.

As referenced earlier, Fairfax County chairs nine of the 15 regional emergency support functions. Regional leadership does take time for our staff. Therefore, as part of our efforts to be better prepared across the National Capital Region, the County should continue to recognize this time commitment, and provide support to our staff members who are providing such leadership throughout the National Capital Region.

The County should continue to partner with groups such as the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington, homebuilders and the homebuilders association, property managers and others to investigate ways to provide emergency supply kits for new homeowners and renters. We have strengthened relationships with many of these organizations through the Fairfax Families Care initiative to support Gulf Coast evacuees now living in Fairfax County. And we should build on these to look for creative ways to ensure that every County resident has an emergency supply kit in their home or apartment.

Through Fairfax Families Care we also have strengthened relationships with area businesses and chambers of commerce. Part of our ongoing preparedness efforts should be a continued working relationship with the business community to identify ways to not only reach and prepare their employees, but also the hundreds and thousands of customers that visit their business establishments on a daily basis.



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## **Plan of Action**

- Use available funding to improve communication capabilities, such as the purchase of satellite phones, connecting the County AEOC with NCR emergency operation centers to improve regional interoperability, and the creation of a regional wireless broadband network.

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A priority for the County should be the use of available funding to enhance communication capabilities, such as:

- Satellite phones.
- The National Capital Region's interoperability efforts of connecting emergency operation centers.
- And the creation of a regional wireless broadband network.

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## Plan of Action

- Continue to participate in the NCR strategic planning efforts as part of our region's homeland security partnership.
- Strive for an optimal balance of preparedness capabilities across the County that recognizes differing risks and circumstances, and leverages mutual aid agreements.

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As the largest jurisdiction in Northern Virginia, Fairfax County has a duty to continue its participation in regional emergency planning and in the continued development of partnerships with local, state, regional and federal homeland security organizations. It is through such efforts – where leaders from local, state, regional, and federal governments, citizen community groups, private sector, nonprofit organizations and non-governmental organizations come together – that we can work collaboratively for a safe and secure National Capital Region.

All areas of the County need to be prepared in the event of a terrorist attack or a severe weather event. We have done a good job of ensuring that our public safety personnel and first responders have adequate personal protective equipment and supplies. We need to make the same commitment to each of the other emergency support functions to ensure that the County can provide a balanced response to an emergency.

## Plan of Action

- Maintain and improve the capacity of the County to handle emergencies through appropriate allocations during the upcoming FY '07 budget process and decision-making regarding Department of Homeland Security UASI grant funds.
- Continue to partner with special needs groups and organizations, such as the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons, the Community Services Board and others.

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The County needs to seek out ways to improve our capacity to handle emergencies through proper budgeting and grants management processes, such as the Department of Homeland Security's Urban Area Security Initiative grants.

While still making appropriate expenditures on equipment, we need to give new focus toward planning, training and capacity building that goes beyond just the purchase of more "widgets."

The County needs to maintain and increase its commitment to partnering with organizations representing people with special needs, including the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons and others. The Community Services Board is also a vital partner in our efforts and emergency management officials need to continually seek out ways to involve these special needs populations into our planning and emergency exercises and use the information from the National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness Initiative to seek out ways to improve our relationships and communications with people with special needs.

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## **Plan of Action**

- Develop a comprehensive communication plan to inform the public about the extensive County emergency planning and preparedness efforts and capabilities.
- Continue to assess evolving technology and incorporate it into emergency planning efforts as appropriate.
- Continue to support countywide and regional exercises as a method to constantly refine process and planning.

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As the County continues to move forward, an important component of our efforts should be the development of a comprehensive communications plan to inform our residents about the County's emergency planning and preparedness, and the County's capabilities in this area.

We should also continue to assess evolving technology, such as wireless capabilities, and incorporate it into emergency planning efforts as appropriate.

And we need to continue to support countywide and regional exercises as a method to constantly refine the process and the planning.

## The Need to Prepare

- There are approximately 4,000 Fairfax County first responders to serve over 1 million residents.
- Our first responders don't all wear uniforms. You have an important role to play in emergency preparedness!
- Every resident should have a home emergency supply kit as well as emergency supplies at their work location.
- Know the emergency plans at your children's school.

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In conclusion, I want our residents to know that when bad things happen, the County will respond and work 24/7 until we have resolved the situation.

However, with approximately 4,000 first responders to serve a population of over 1 million residents, and with only about one-third of those responders on duty at any given time, each one of us must take personal responsibility to be prepared.

Not so long ago, Hurricane Isabel demonstrated the need for this self-sufficiency with 60 percent of Fairfax County without power for more than 24 hours.

And for those with children, an important part of being prepared is in knowing what your child's school will do during an emergency. Will the children be kept in a secure location or will the school be in a "lock down" environment? These are among the types of questions you will want to find the answers for – before an emergency event occurs.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of being prepared. As residents of Fairfax County, we **MUST** take personal responsibility and be prepared to sustain ourselves for a minimum of three days in the event of an emergency. This means having a flashlight and battery-powered radio or TV; three days supply of non-perishable food; one gallon of water per person per day for three days; any necessary medications; extra clothing; and personal hygiene items.

The Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council Web site at [www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org](http://www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org) has details on what you should include in your emergency supply kit as well as how to put together a communication plan to stay in touch with loved ones.

As Chairman Connolly said in his remarks at the Sept. 11 Remembrance Ceremony at the Fairfax County 9/11 Memorial Grove Garden, "our first responders don't all wear uniforms."

Emergency response is not only done by our dedicated County staff. Every one of us has an important role to play!



## Additional Resources

- **Office of Emergency Management** –  
Available to present programs on  
emergency preparedness.  
703-324-2362, TTY 711  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/oem)
- **Fairfax County Citizen Corps** –  
Available to present programs on  
emergency preparedness.  
[www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org](http://www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org)
- **Volunteer Fairfax** –  
Provides volunteer resources for the  
County's emergency information hotline  
and for Citizen Corps programs.  
[www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org)



[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cear](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cear)

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Mr. Chairman, members of the Board of Supervisors... thank you for the opportunity to present this information to you today about the state of emergency planning and preparedness here in Fairfax County.

We will make this presentation available to the public by placing it on the County's Web site.

On the screen you will notice just a few of the resources available should you or any residents have additional questions about emergency preparedness here in Fairfax County.

I would also welcome any questions the Board may have at this time.